

Appln. No. : 09/945,377
Filed : August 31, 2001

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-18 (canceled)

Claim 19 (new): A knee brace, comprising:

an upper portion;

a lower portion;

34 a plurality of straps for securing said upper portion to a person's thigh and said lower portion to a person's calf;

medial and lateral hinges for pivotally coupling said upper and lower portions together; and

a hinge deflector adapted to be worn between the person's knee and said medial hinge, said hinge deflector having an inner side facing the knee and an outer side facing said medial hinge, said outer side being formed with a first projection extending around a front edge of said medial hinge, said projection having a curved surface shaped for deflecting an object away from said medial hinge.

Claim 20 (new): The brace of Claim 19, wherein said first projection extends around said front edge of said medial hinge to an outer side of said medial hinge.

Claim 21 (new): The brace of Claim 19, wherein said outer side of said hinge deflector is formed with a recess shaped for receiving at least a portion of said medial hinge.

Claim 22 (new): The brace of Claim 19, wherein said outer side of said hinge deflector further comprises a second projection extending around a rear edge of said medial hinge.

Claim 23 (new): The brace of Claim 22, wherein said second projection is positioned for limiting rotational movement of said medial hinge during flexion of the person's knee.

Claim 24 (new): The brace of Claim 19, wherein said hinge deflector is made of a molded plastic material.

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Claim 25 (new): The deflector of Claim 19, further comprising a plurality of ribs along said inner side of said hinge deflector for increasing the structural integrity of said hinge deflector.

Claim 26 (new): A hinge deflector comprising a shell configured to be positioned between a person's knee and a medial hinge of a knee brace, said shell having an inner side facing the knee and an outer side facing said medial hinge, said outer side including a first projection adapted for extending around a front edge of the medial hinge, said first projection being formed with a curved surface shaped for deflecting an object away from the medial hinge.

Claim 27 (new): The deflector of Claim 26, wherein said outer side of said shell further comprises a recess shaped for receiving a portion of the medial hinge.

Claim 28 (new): The deflector of Claim 26, wherein said shell includes a plurality of openings for receiving fasteners to connect said shell to the knee brace.

Claim 29 (new): The deflector of Claim 26, wherein said shell is made of a molded plastic material.

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Claim 30 (new): The deflector of Claim 26, wherein said outer side further comprises a second projection adapted to extend around a rear edge of the medial hinge, said second projection having a curved deflecting surface and being positioned to limit a range of motion of the medial hinge.

Claim 31 (new): The deflector of Claim 26, further comprising a plurality of ribs along said inner side for increasing the structural integrity of said shell.

Claim 32 (new): The deflector of Claim 26, wherein said shell has a substantially elliptical shape.

Claim 33 (new): The deflector of Claim 27, wherein said recess has a substantially elliptical shape.

Claim 34 (new): A knee brace, comprising:

an upper portion;

a lower portion;

a plurality of straps for securing said upper portion to a person's thigh and said lower portion to a person's calf;

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medial and lateral hinges for pivotally coupling said upper and lower portions together; and

a hinge deflector adapted to be worn between the person's knee and said medial hinge, said hinge deflector having an inner side facing the person's knee and an outer side facing said medial hinge, said outer side being formed with a recess for receiving at least a portion of said medial hinge and including a first projection positioned to extend around a front edge of said medial hinge, said projection having a curved surface shaped for deflecting an object away from said medial hinge.

34 Claim 35 (new): The brace of Claim 34, wherein said outer side of said hinge deflector further comprises a second projection extending around a rear edge of said medial hinge, said second projection being positioned for limiting rotational movement of said medial hinge during flexion of the person's knee.

Claim 36 (new): The brace of Claim 35, wherein said hinge deflector is made of a molded plastic material.